Issue 1 - June 2016

RAVEN'S CAW

Welcome to what we hope will be the first of many issues to come. This issue of Raven's Caw will be featured around Yuletide, considering we are coming up to the Winter Solstice here in Australia we thought it to be fitting.

We welcome other Wotanists/Odinists/Asatru groups or individuals to contribute any articles, drawings, book reviews, poetry etc. Any Hearths that would like to advertise any upcoming events please feel free to contact us. Submissions can be emailed to ravens.caw@hotmail.com

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Southern birth, Northern soul

Greetings Kinfolk! The aim of this newsletter is to help you to extend your knowledge on our Gods, our Folk, our history and our customs, as these must be taught in order for us to fulfil our duties as true men and women of Odin. We at Raven's Caw are passionate about the paths we've paved and we will always strive to help others forge their own!

Being an Odinist in the Southern Hemisphere can be quite confusing, especially if we follow the wheel of the year followed by those in the North. As our religion is one based on Nature; and we honour our Gods according to the seasons, it just doesn't add up that we celebrate Yule, which is the Winter Solstice in December when it is our summer, or to celebrate Ostara the Spring Equinox in what is our autumn.

While some Odinists in the Southern Hemisphere choose to follow the traditions of our Folk in the North, I personally find it more fitting to flip the wheel around so Yule is in June when it is the winter solstice and Midsummer is in December. This way we honour the Gods and celebrate the festivities in the seasons that they are aligned too.

Yule

The name Yule is from the Old Norse JOL, meaning wheel and identifies the moment when the wheel of the year is at its lowest point before rising again and is represented as a fiery wheel rolling across the skies.

Yule begins with Mother Night which is the night before the Winter Solstice, the shortest day and longest night of the year, in the Southern Hemisphere this happens on June 20th, and is held over a 12 day period. Yule is about honouring the beginning of Sunna's return and the breaking of winter, as after the winter solstice our days start to become longer and the nights shorter. It marks the return of the God Baldur from the realm of Hel and the loosening of winters grip over the land.

This is the time of year where we honour our Ancestors, and is the time when Jólnir (another name for Odin)

leads the Wild hunt through the nine worlds on Sleipnir, his eight legged steed, accompanied by the spirits of people, horses and dogs. It is a time for great feasting and the honouring of Thor, for driving back the frost giants, and to ask Frey to grant us prosperity for the coming year.

Mother Night

The first night of Yule is called Mother Night; this is held on the eve of the Winter Solstice. This is the night where we honour and celebrate Frigga and all the Disir, the protective feminine ancestors who watch over us. We prepare a feast in their honour and set a place at our table for them, afterwards we bury that food in sacrifice. This night represents the rebirth of the world from the darkness of winter and welcomes the return of Sunna. This is the shortest day and longest night of the year, from here on in the days will get longer and we will welcome Sunna's return.

The 12 nights of Yuletide –

incorporated from Stephan McNallen

THE FIRST DAY OF YULE – Industriousness June 20th

Sunna begins her return!

Be all that we dare to be by taking risks and benefiting from the rewards of our accomplishments. Aspire to be more than a mere spectator in life. Admire our inner strength for seeing things through to the end. Let us be industrious! This day, I will pour a libation to Sunna, Frigga & all the Disir.

THE SECOND DAY OF YULE - JUSTICE June 21

By serving Justice, we rise to the heroic within us and build a good reputation among friends and foes alike. Judge those fairly on their behaviour and treatment of us and our Folk. Seek justice for those of our Folk who have been wronged, grow beyond our own emotions. Let us be Just! This day, I will pour a libation to the givers of law and the bringers of Justice who have served the Germanic folk throughout our history.

THE THIRD DAY OF YULE – COURAGE June 22

Face life with courage by mastering our fears and extending our capabilities. By always defending and doing our duty to our Folk, regardless of the cost involved. Let us be Courageous! This day, I will pour a libation to Tyr, who gave his hand and bound the wolf, Fenrir.

THE FOURTH DAY OF YULE – GENEROSITY June 23rd

Be generous to those of our Folk who need a helping hand, weather this is by financial support, offering a hand of friendship or helping out when needed. If we can't uplift each other when times are tough, then who will? Today, let us be generous! This day, I will pour a libation to Urd, for all the bounty she has bestowed upon us.

THE FIFTH DAY OF YULE- HOSPITALITY June 24th

In the days of our ancestors, hospitality was a way of life and a necessity for survival. Modern life can leave us feeling isolated and alone so be hospitable to those of our Folk who are deserving. Uplift our people by opening

our hearts, our homes, our wallets and our minds. Let us be hospitable! This day I will pour a libation to the land wights, the beings inherent to the land on which my home sits, for our mutual hospitality.

THE SIXTH DAY OF YULE – MODERATION June 25th

Enjoy life but do it in moderation, there is no reason to abuse anything to excess or extreme. A man who does not know his own limits is one that cannot be true to our Folk. Let us honour moderation. This day I pour a libation to Frigga, for the stabilizing and moderating influence of home and hearth.

THE SEVENTH DAY OF YULE– COMMUNITY June 26th

Community building is about bringing our Folk together for the advancement of our people as a whole. Making sacrifices for the community (our fellow Folk) by looking beyond our own individual self-interest and at how we can best serve our Folk, is what is needed for us to survive and is the essence of Nature. When self-interest threatens to replace idealism, we notice an immediate weakening in the force that maintains the community. When the community breaks, so will fall our civilization. Let us strengthen the bonds of Community. This day I will pour a libation to my Kith and Kin.

THE EIGHTH DAY OF YULE – INDIVIDUALTIY June 27

We need to find a balance between the value of the community and ourselves, the individual. In finding a balance between the two we are able to encourage cooperation of group goals, while still looking at the uniqueness and freedom of the individual. Our ancestors were strong, stubborn, irrepressible personalities who were also fiercely loyal to their Kith and Kin. Let us honour our Individuality! This day I will pour a libation to Odin, the very epitome of the unique, individual, evolving Self.

THE NINTH DAY OF YULE - TRUTH June 28

Truth, something that we don't hear much off in this day and age, it seems that the whole world is lying to us. Lies and deceit undermine us as a person, it poisons our lives and destroys our relationships which in turn ultimately destroys the community of which we are a part. The truth strengthens us as a community; we need to teach each other the truth of our people, our customs and our history and not one jaded by outside influences. Telling the truth only adds to our reputation and our individual spirit as our word is our bond. Let us express the Truth in our lives! This day I will pour a libation to Var, the Goddess who hears all oaths and promises, that she may strengthen my ability to say and live the Truth.

THE TENTH DAY OF YULE – STEADFASTNESS June 29

To remain dutifully firm and unwavering to not only our beliefs but to all we set out to do, as this is vital to our success and the success of our Folk. To be able to keep up the fight in a cause that matters to us we need to remain steadfast and see things to conclusion. Let us be Steadfast! This day I will pour a libation to all those who have persevered in the modern Reawakening of the Germanic Way.

THE ELEVENTH DAY OF YULE - LOYALTY June 30

We should give loyalty to ourselves, our faith, our beliefs, our values, our spouses and above all our Folk. Our ancestor's society was based on Loyalty; they were loyal to the family, the tribe, a chosen leader and their Gods & Goddesses and the same should apply to us today. We should show loyalty to our Folk and expect it in return, to stand by our people to the very end if need be. Where there is no Loyalty, there is no Honour. Let us be Loyal! This day I will pour a libation to Wiglaf, the warrior who stood with Beowulf when all others fled in terror.

THE TWELFTH DAY OF YULE – WISDOM June 31

Wisdom comes with knowledge and experience; we must continually study and learn to gain wisdom. Odin is the embodiment of wisdom-seeking, making many sacrifices in his pursuit of gaining more wisdom. Let us be Wise! This day I will pour a libation to Odin, the very embodiment of Wisdom-seeking.

Freyja & the Disir Study by Raudbjorn Thorsson

1: Who is Freyja?

2: What does the name "Freyja" mean?

3: Who is Freyja's father?

4: Who is Freyja's brother?

5: What is Freyja's home called?

6: What is Freyjas Hall called?

7: What family of Gods does Freyja come from?

8: What animals pull Freyja's chariot?

9: Name at least 3 attributes Freyja is known for?

10: True or False, Freya gets first pick of the fallen warriors?

11: Who is Freyja married too?

12: What are the names of Freyja's children?

13: Why does Freyja cry 'tears of gold'?

14: What is the name of Freyja's necklace and how did she acquire it?

15: What other names is Freyja known by?

16: Who used deception in trying to make Freyja get married? Explain the story…

17: What animal does Freyja shape shift into?

18: What runes are associated with Freyja?

19: Who are the Disir?

20: What does the term Disir mean?

21: Do you think it is important to Honour your ancestors? Why or Why Not?

Ansuz

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This is a rune of intelligence; harmony, truth and wisdom. It is derived from the Aesir and is associated with 'the mouth of god', specifically Odin. It is the wisdom of ancestral memory and was instrumental in mankinds creation.

Decorating your home for Yule!

Sparkly Pine Cones

Collect some pinecones and gently rinse them to remove all sap and dirt. Bake for about an hour at 200 degrees celsius on a foil-lined baking sheet in order to dry out and kill any remaining bugs. Brush on some white school glue and sprinkle on white glitter for an icy look, or any colour of your choice. Tie a ribbon, string or bit of twine to hang.

Rune Ornaments

2 c flour

½ c salt

¾ c water

Combine in a large bowl until a workable dough forms. Roll out on a smooth surface to about 1/8 of an inch thickness. Using a cookie cutter; metal ones work the best, cut out the shape of the ornament then cut a rune design into the top of the ornament. Use a straw to poke a hole to hang the ornaments by and transfer to a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. You may want to smooth the edges gently with your finger for a cleaner look. Bake at 180 degrees celsisus for 2 to 3 hours and cool on a wire rack. You will need to turn them a few times so they don't brown, but they should be hard. Allow to cool and then paint the indented rune and pull the ribbon through the hole and tie.

The Yule Log

The burning of the Yule log is a ritual that our ancestors practised; they would burn a huge oak log in honour of Thor. This log was collected and lit on Mother Night, the eve of the Winter Solstice. To light the new log we do this with the charred remains of the previous year's log.

You can decorate your Yule log with pinecones, dried berries, such as cranberries, cuttings of mistletoe, holly, pine needles, ivy, feathers and cinnamon sticks. If you don't have a fireplace you can choose to place a candle on top of the log.

The Yule log is usually collected from the root of a hardwood tree and the best wood to use in Australia is that of the Mallee or the Tasmanian Oak.

Yule Wreath

To make a Yule wreath, you will need a wire frame, pine cones, twigs from pine trees, some holly (fresh if you can source it or artificial if not) and florist wire, or kitchen ties. If you can not source a wire frame you can use 2 wire coat hangers, bent into a circle, and set about 1/2 to 1 inch apart, to form the base for your wreath.

Place a small twig, around 6 to 8 inches in size, on the ring and wrap a little bit of florist's wire to keep it in place. Continue until your wreath is complete. Next add your pine cones, tying them in place with the florist wire, then add the holly.

Freyja & Disir answer key

1. Freyja is the Goddess of love, war, divination, magic and the sister of Freyr, daughter of Njord

2. Lady

3. The Vanir God of the sea, Njord

4. Frey, her twin brother

5. Folkvangr (Warriors field)

6. Sessrumnir (with many seats)

7. The Vanir

8. Cats

9. Beauty, love, sexuality

10. True "The lay of Grimnir"

11. Odr

12. Hnoss (jewel) & Gersemi (treasure) (see genealogical tables in the "Prose Edda" translated by Jessie Byock)

13. Because her husband "Odr" went travelling on distant paths and left Freyja behind crying 'tears of gold' (Amber)

14. Brisingamen (Necklace of the Brisings)

15. Mardoll, Horn, Gefn, Syr, Skialf, Thrung

16. Loki used deception to assist a giant in building the walls that surround Asgard. If the giant could build it in one winter he was promised Freyja's hand in marriage

17. Falcon

18. Fehu, uruz, thurisaz, ansuz, raidho, kenaz, gebo, wunjo

19. Female spirits

20. From 'A concise dictionary of old Icelandic by Geir T. Zoega: Dis (pl. disir), sister, female guardian angel, spirit or Goddess, Maid

21. Your own answer suffices

Yuletide Blot

WAU Australia will be conducting a Yule Blot on Saturday 18th June, starting at 1pm. This will be held in the Adelaide area. This is a family friendly event and as such invitations will only apply to people who they know personally. If you wish to attend any future blots, please email wau_southoz@hotmail.com to make yourself known.

Natures Law

Natures Law is evidence that the Gods speak directly to us. Our Germanic Gods and Goddesses represent forces of Nature, fertility and noble ancestors; they provide us with a linkage between the past, present and future. Their deeds teach us a moral and spiritual lesson of courage and Aryan virtues. Honour and preserve our natural environment, as this is where we are closest to and commune with our Gods.